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Grapevine is published monthly by: Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches

A Local Ministry Area comprising the parishes
of Clydau, Llanglydwen, Llanfyrnach, Llanwinio and
Mynachlog-ddu

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Grapevine copy deadline is 23:59 hrs on the 10th of the preceding month

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£130 per full page ad £70 per half page ad £40 per quarter page ad

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Dear valued reader,

As you can imagine, there has been a great deal of discussion and consultation behind the scenes about the immediate future of the Grapevine. As there will be no services to post and no social gatherings to report upon it is going to be difficult. Distribution is also going to be a problem if we are not going to church. ***See your local church minister or officer about this.*** It may be possible to receive your Grapevine by post at a cost of about 72p if collection is a real problem—in which case **let me know**. There will, of course, be an on-line version on the church web site—frennichurches.org.uk.

However, the real problem is what to put in it!!!

If you are a closet writer, painter, historian or photographer, this may be your big chance to share your skills and stories with other readers!

I am therefore appealing to you to send me anything that you would like to share. It doesn't have to be religious or theological. It could be a funny story; a quiz; a beautiful photograph; a piece of local history—in fact anything at all, but keep it clean!!!

I really want to keep the Grapevine going through this crisis.

It will pass! But we don't know when!

So please, please make my day and send me something to publish!

We will see what happens next month and take it from there. Everything seems to be changing hourly so who can say what will happen next!

Meanwhile, follow the Government's guidelines, self-isolate if you have to and STAY SAFE! We need you!!!

So please get in touch with me with your comments, views and/or articles etc. Here are my contact details:

Send me an email at editorgrapevine@frenni churches.org.uk

or phone me on 01994 484404

or write to me at Myrtle Hill, Gellywen, Carmarthen, SA33 6DS



Please note that most of the content of this magazine was written before Coronavirus reached its current crisis point, and therefore all of the services and events advertised will not now take place. Please contact your minister or church official for advice.

The Bishop of St. Davids, the Rt. Revd. Dr. Joanna Penberthy, has now decreed that ALL church services and church meetings of any kind are CANCELLED until further notice. Please contact your minister if you require support or guidance.

Editorial

Lent is a solemn season during which we are challenged to prepare ourselves to mark the events which led up to the death of Our Lord. Yet this year there is an added seriousness because of the spread of the coronavirus throughout the world for, as the British Prime Minister has put it, many loved ones may well die before their time. At the time of writing these words it is thought that at least 10,000 people are already infected in Britain. The figures in Wales show a steady increase. This is undeniably a very serious situation. We assuredly should not ignore the fact that many people have already died because of this pandemic. All of us should follow the scientific and medical advice and take all appropriate measures, including for

example the scrupulous and frequent washing of hands. It looks likely that the Government will require us to avoid large assemblies. This has happened already in Scotland. This in turn may affect the holding of public worship. In respect of this, two points may be made at present. First, the suspension of public worship is not unprecedented. In 1576 the archbishop of Milan, St Charles Borromeo (whose father confessor was a Welshman, Gruffydd Roberts) ordered the closure of the churches for Mass during a plague in his diocese. His intention was not to abandon the practice of Christian worship for he did much to raise the standards of worship and of the clergy during his episcopate. Rather he showed great interest and concern for the sick and the poor during the plague and sought to save lives as best he could. Secondly, Anglicanism teaches the efficacy of what is called spiritual communion, that is, when for good reason, the faithful cannot receive the Holy Communion by receiving the elements ordained by Christ at the Last Supper then they may nonetheless be assured that they receive the Body and Blood of Christ through faith and repentance. The relevant passage in the 1662 Prayer Book is found as a rubric at the end of the service of the Communion of the Sick. Here it is

“if a man, either by reason of extremity of sickness ... or by any other just impediment, do not receive the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and blood the Curate

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shall instruct him that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and steadfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed his Blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefore, he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ profitably to his Soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth".

Our response to this grave situation is not however simply precautionary but also intercessory. In the same Prayer Book and in the Welsh Church's provision too we have the Litany. It is an ancient and valuable form of prayer for ourselves and for others. To each of the biddings for prayer the faithful respond by asking for God's mercy. We find there:

"from plague, pestilence and famine; from battle, violence and murder, and from sudden death, God Lord, deliver us".

Those words should strike home to our hearts as we address them to God's merciful heart. Incidentally the phrase "sudden death" translates a Latin expression which means unprepared death and the word "curate" means the one who has the cure or care of souls, that is, the Vicar.

The coronavirus is no respecter of persons. These past few days we have heard that the Canadian Prime Minister has had to isolate himself as his wife is infected. A Minister of State in the British Government has also been affected. The Queen herself has had to cancel engagements as a precautionary measure. No one is immune and no vaccine antidote has yet been produced. It is remarkable how a small germ, invisible to our eyes, can have such an effect. The stock markets have had their biggest fall since 1987; the entire country of Italy has been put into quarantine: international sports have been cancelled and just today, at very short notice, the rugby international due to be held at Cardiff has been postponed. Many other consequences have already followed upon the spread of Covid19. This pandemic reminds us sharply of our human weakness. Is that all we can and should say at this juncture?

There is more to consider.

Firstly, we need to avoid the two dangers of panic and complacency. The first leads to precipitate and ill-considered action. The second fails to respond adequately to the undoubted seriousness of the situation.

Secondly, as well as praying for all those infected by the coronavirus, and whilst remembering that it is not of itself invariably a fatal condition, we should also intercede for all those in the medical service who are having to deal with this huge problem on a daily basis. Many others too merit a place in our thoughts and prayers:

the families affected, those particularly in danger because of existing weaknesses, the elderly and the little children, those responsible for taking difficult decisions in the National Health Service who may have to disappoint many who have been waiting months, even years, for treatment and surgery and will now have to wait even longer.

Thirdly, does not this matter remind us that we mortals - the word is chosen deliberately - do not have all the answers? Yes, we can learn a great deal from the discoveries and research of scientists but even so we have not hitherto found a cure for the common cold let alone the coronavirus. The secularist, as in times past, thinks he can enjoy the good life and organise his life without reference to God. It is not so. Long ago the Psalmist said, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God". The fool there refers to the folly of supposing that we are self-sufficient and, potentially at least, omniscient. We are not. We are created and sustained by Almighty God, not by ourselves.

A small invisible germ is wreaking havoc in the world at present. Long ago in a tomb in a small country and in an event that likewise was invisible Jesus was raised victorious over death. That is the Faith which millions will once more affirm and celebrate this impending Easter. The Good News of the Risen Christ has sustained people in joy and sorrow for two thousand years and, by God's mercy, will continue so do so long after Covid19 has passed. In this joyous faith, and without wishing to minimise in any way the pandemic with which we all now have to contend, may I nonetheless wish you a renewed faith in Him who is risen from the dead. Christ has trampled down death by death and on those in the tombs He bestows life!

Canon Jeffrey Gainer

Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches Clydau, Llanglydwen, Llanfyrnach, Llanwinio and Mynachlog-ddu

We are living in very worrying and dangerous times and, as you must know, all public gatherings have been cancelled for the foreseeable future. Accordingly the Church in Wales has been forced to cancel services with immediate effect. Therefore the Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches has decided not to print its services over April here as there is no likelihood of them taking place. I print below the statement which has been made by the Church in Wales and which is available on their web-site.



The Church in Wales has announced it will suspend all acts of public worship until further notice due to the coronavirus outbreak. This also means weddings will be postponed until the 31st of July.

"Weddings scheduled until 31 July 2020 should be postponed and any fees already paid refunded. Couples with a later wedding date should be free to cancel/rearrange without financial penalty. If for pressing pastoral reasons a wedding must take place, it should be solemnised with a maximum of ten persons present."

On Tuesday afternoon, the Church also announced funerals and baptisms could only go ahead if fewer than 10 people attend the service. In a statement they said they were taking action in light of new governmental advice which advises against all but essential travel.

"All church services and gatherings for public worship should no longer take place. This includes regular Sunday services and weekday services, as well as occasional offices. Study groups and other parochial events that gather people together should also no longer take place."

"Our guidance relating to the ceasing of public worship applies to funerals in church. Clergy may continue to take a funeral service at the graveside and at crematoria. Once the wider situation makes it safe so to do, the bereaved should be offered opportunities for remembering their loved ones in church at a future date."

The Church in Wales said it would be staying in touch with the community by phone, by post and online helping the most vulnerable with the delivery of food, medicines and essential services and supplies.

It comes after it was confirmed a second person in Wales had died after contracting COVID-19. The 96-year-old was being treated at Morriston Hospital and had underlying health conditions.

Post script: At the time of printing there were 418 confirmed cases in Wales and 16 people have died.

Editor

MY JOURNEY TO THE CHURCH IN LLANGLYDWEN

I am pre-war. My mother was Jewish and my father a member of the Salvation Army. My mother died giving birth to me. My father did not want to take me home from the hospital. I have been told one of the neighbours did that.

My father's sister and her husband looked after me. My father met another lady who was also a Salvationist and he wanted to marry her. She said she would only marry him if he got rid of me and so my aunt and uncle who had lost two babies of their own decided to adopt me. I was almost three years old then.

My lovely new mother Grace was a Methodist and a Sunday school teacher and my father William went to the Church of England. During the war there was a morning Sunday School at the Baptist church about 100 yards from where we lived, and I went

there every Sunday. As we lived about 8 miles from the centre of Bristol it would be easy for my parents to get me home if there was an air raid.

As I grew older and the war came to an end, I joined my mother on Sunday afternoons at the Methodist Church where my Grandparents went and my mother's younger brother played the organ.

My father went to the eight o'clock communion service at the Church of England and sometimes I went with him and had a blessing.

When I was older, he asked me if I would like to be confirmed: I said that would be lovely but I still wanted to go to the Methodist church as well where my grandparents, mother and uncle went. Everyone thought that was good so I was confirmed. No one asked if I had been Christened. (Many years after that, I was Christened in the river Jordan)

I married Cliff when I was twenty and attended the Church in the village where we lived and was the church warden for years. Then we decided to move to Wales and we soon joined the church in Llanglydwen.

As I had started training to be a Reader in Bristol I decided to see if I could continue here and the first person I met was Joanna Penberthy, now our Bishop.

I should like to thank you all for putting up with me and my sermons for all these years. I miss you but I will still attend the church services and worship with you again soon.

God bless you all.

Maureen

DANCING QUEEN

Your editor has allowed me back just one last time to sum up our appreciation of our Reader, Maureen Henneveld, following her retirement from active service.

I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Maureen for over 20 years. Her commitment as a Christian and as Reader has been an example to us all. Not everyone is aware that to be licensed as a Reader – and therefore as a preacher – requires years of theological study, so Maureen's sermons were always underpinned by sound scholarship; but she often managed to find a quirky way into a subject which captured our attention right from the off.

Her experience as a prison visitor gave her rare insights into the human condition, and informed her ministry with understanding and compassion. These qualities came into their own when she was dealing with the recently bereaved: beyond the normal duties of a Reader, Maureen was qualified to conduct funerals and cremations, with all the sensitivity and empathy which that entails.





***Above left:
Vera Evans, a good friend of
Bethel chapel, who celebrated
her 60th birthday recently.***

***Above right:
Harri William Thorne, with his
parents Claire and Mathew,
who came all the way from
Belgium, to be baptised at the
Tabernacle.***

***Right:
Eric and Maisie Howells on the
day they celebrated 60 years
of married life.***

Much of Maureen's work was done quietly and unseen, as was her generosity. Only sometimes did we know about it, for instance when she embroidered purificators to be found throughout the LMA, made that gorgeous set of themed kneelers and seasonal pulpit falls for Llanglydwen Church, and donated the public address system there.

As Focal Minister of that parish she took responsibility for its spiritual welfare and represented its interests at meetings of the Core Ministry Team, a body which she briefly chaired at the start of the current interregnum.

She was only reprimanded once, she says, for misbehaving in church – not as a toddler, but as an adult Reader. The last hymn was *Lord of the dance*, with its chorus *Dance, then, wherever you may be*. So dance she did, down the aisle on the way out and was promptly told off (not by me: I used to follow her lead!). It reminded me of the true story of the monk who, filled with holy joy, burst out laughing during the time of divine service – and was duly whipped.

So, Maureen, enjoy your retirement and take our love with you wherever you go. And thank you for the ministry. Thank you for the friendship. Thank you for the dance.

Jonathan Copus

Mercy – an update

My last update on Mercy, the 10 year old Ugandan girl with no feet, whom the four of us in the Crymych Group of Churches support (my part of this being copious amounts of crocheting!) was back in October.

A lot has happened since then in the lives of Mercy and her foster-family. Over Christmas Kens, her foster-dad, left Mary his wife and their 2 children with friends, and travelled with Mercy to remote Northern Uganda to visit her grandparents,

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siblings and many relations. The pictures of Mercy and her grandma and family are so full of love. It was discovered on her return that, so active had she been, her prosthetic feet needed to be replaced so there was another trip to the hospital (CoRSU) in Entebbe for new feet and some physio for her knock knees.

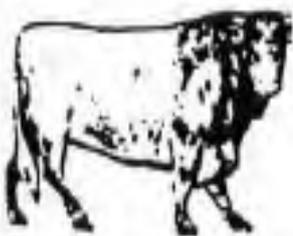
The shop and cafe that Mary and Kens have started at the university in Fort Portal is going well – with a lot of support from their West Wales 'family'. Hopefully before too long they may become more self-supporting.

And my crochet hook has had a change of direction. My latest line is hearts. In a whole rainbow of colours, they come starched with a loop for hanging, or unstarched without a loop when they make beautiful coasters! These are becoming very popular – I'm hoping that maybe St. Davids Cathedral may stock some – but with the current state of emergency this may not be for a while. Much loved by little girls (especially the pink ones! - coasters not girls that is!) and parents of new babies to decorate the nursery. These cost £2 each, plus postage if necessary. See photograph, page 21. The small hearts shown are 40p each. My contact details – judy.webb@btinternet.com 01239 698405. *Judy Webb*

Llanfyrnach



*Warm congratulations to
Janet & David Carter,
who celebrated their
Diamond Wedding Anniversary
on the 15th of February!*



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CLYDAU

IN THE GRIP OF WINTER - OR NOT!

The access road outside St. Clydau was re-surfaced in 2016 by the local authority. This serves as the car park during services, but the resurfacing highlighted the fact that there is no drainage under the road. In wet weather, and we get a lot of that, run-off slides onto the grass either side of the road - and then runs over the road as it makes its way downhill looking for a way to the sea. Freezing conditions overnight on the 25-26 January meant that this run-off turned into sheet ice on the tarmac, and when Elizabeth Law turned up the next morning the ice was cunningly concealed under more fresh water running over it. Hence Elizabeth's car helpless on the ice and Dylan Harries from Kim Petty's farm came to assist with his tow rope, and Huw Rees with his 4 X 4, to tow vehicle out. We all hope that icy roads will be a distant memory by the time you see this! Until next winter anyway.

The following poem was found on Facebook by Judy Webb. Unfortunately we do not know who wrote these words, but hopefully they will shine a little light on the current crisis which is frightening so many readers:

*Yes there is fear, yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying, yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.
But, they say in Wuhan that after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds sing again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet*



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***Above and right:
Farewell to
Bwlchgroes
Village Hall
Below:
Elizabeth Law's car
marooned on the
ice outside Clydau
Church***



*The sky is no longer thick with fumes, but blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other across the empty squares, keeping their windows
open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the west of Ireland is offering free meals and delivery to the
housebound.
Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number through the
neighbourhood so that the elderly may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples are preparing to welcome and
shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray, and remember that
Yes there is fear, But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation. But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying. But there does not need to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness. But there does not have to be disease of the soul.
Yes there is even death. But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noise of your panic
The birds are singing again, The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming, and we are always encompassed by love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able to touch across the empty square,
Sing.*

(Source unknown)

END OF AN ERA

Afternoon tea on the 24th February 2020 in the **Bwlchygroes Village Hall** marked the end of an era – the hall's era! The hall and kitchen served Bwlchygroes School variously as a school dinner hall, nursery, extra classroom, and theatre/concert hall until the school closed in 1999.

In 1951, the Pembrokeshire Education Authority decided to provide the school with a hall. Interestingly, the foundation had already been laid when W. R. Evans returned from the RAF to Bwlchygroes as Headmaster. He rapidly saw the possibilities for enhanced use of the hall if it could be enlarged. After prolonged discussions with the Education Authority, the plan was extended, with a kitchen being also built on to the hall. Basically, the hall was largely built from old army huts from South Pembrokeshire and Hermon. The building was erected by Mr Spencer Owen of Tegryn. The headmaster, W. R. Evans, ensured that extra height was obtained in the hall, by placing it on a small wall foundation, thus, allowing a stage to be erected for concerts and plays. A kitchen was added on to leave extra space in the hall. Thus, the perseverance of 'W.R.' allowed the community to have a useful multi-purpose hall that could be a focal point of the community, besides serving as a dining room and kitchen for the school. All the alterations to the plans meant extra expense to Spencer Owen for which, amazingly, he was never paid. This resulted in certain council officials being later prosecuted for misappropriation of funds. The hall was officially opened on May 27th, 1952.

The furnishings (stage, chairs etc.) had to be provided by the inhabitants of the district. To fund much of this, a 'bring-and-buy sale' was held on the Saturday after Christmas 1951, when a huge range of items were donated by the community for sale. Some items were bought, returned for re-sale a number of times, thus, raising much money. The sale realised more than £400, a large amount of money in 1951. This epitomised the community spirit.

We should remember that back in 1952, there was no 'Mains' electricity in the area. Thus, electricity was generated initially until about 1959 by means of a generator driven by a 6hp Stationary Lister diesel engine located in a small shed beyond the kitchen. This equipment was lovingly maintained by Mr Griff Lewis from the village, an ex-Hawker Siddeley aircraft engineer, who worked for many years in Bristol before his retirement back to Bwlchygroes.

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Following the school's closure, a syndicate of local people chaired by Terry Chambers (Brynawel) raised money to buy the site from the local authority to serve us as a village and parish hall, since Clydau parish includes Bwlchygroes, Llwyndrain, Star & Tegryn. It became the focal point for local activities, encompassing concerts, eisteddfodau, dramas, jazz nights, pantomimes, not to mention the annual vintage show, the nursery group, a base for the Preseli Green Dragon Bus organisation etc.

Although the community suffered initial disappointments in their quest for grant funding to re-build the now dilapidated hall at Bwlchygroes, success was obtained in the form of a £160,000 grant from The Welsh Government Rural Development Programme (RDP) scheme, 'Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF)'. We are awaiting the outcome of a 'National Lottery Community Fund' grant application (£93,000) to cover completion of the hall, including 'fit-out'.

The afternoon tea was open to anyone who wanted to say goodbye and over 90 people came along. A collection during the tea raised £130 and we were presented with a £300 donation from the local Clydey History Book Association. And that was it; my exterior photographs are the last ones, as demolition work on the hall started on the 2nd March. There isn't a planned finishing date for the work. The contractor expects it to take about nine months, subject to weather; so we might have a new hall for this year's Christmas dinner. If the building works over-run, we might be doing that in a tent, but hopefully, for one year only. *Richard and Elizabeth Law*

Much information on the history of the hall was obtained from the book, "Clydey: Past, Present and Future" published by the "Clydey History Book Association".

LLANWINIO WI



On the 10th of March Trelech WI were the guests of Llanwinio WI for a St. David's Day celebration. Traditional Welsh food (cawl, bara brith and Welsh cakes) were served and a topical quiz was prepared and delivered by Mrs. Jane Evans. Due to the current Coronavirus crisis, and in line with Government instructions, all meetings and trips have been cancelled until further notice.

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Services in April

5th Palm Sunday. Holy Week. (All services are bilingual)

Meidrim	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
	9.45 am	Blessing of palms, procession and Holy Eucharist
	4.00 pm	Evensong
Merthyr	11.15 am	Holy Eucharist

9th Maundy Thursday

Meidrim	7.30 pm	Eucharist of the Last Supper & Washing of the altar
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10th Good Friday

Meidrim	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
	1.30 pm	Liturgy of the day
Merthyr	7.30 pm	Evening Prayer and sermon

11th Holy Saturday: Easter Eve

Meidrim	2.30 pm	Thanksgiving for the birth of a child
	8.00 pm	The Last Vigil

12th Easter Day. Christ is risen. Alleluia!

Meidrim	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
	9.45 am	Holy Eucharist
	3.30 pm	Evensong with Holy Baptism
Merthyr	11.15 am	Holy Eucharist

13th Easter Monday

Meidrim	11.00 am	Holy Eucharist
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19th First Sunday after Easter

Meidrim	9.00 am	Boreol Weddi
	9.45 am	Y Cymun Bendigaid
Merthyr	2.15 pm	Evening Prayer (followed by the AVM)

26th Second Sunday after Easter

Merthyr	9.30 am	Holy Eucharist
Meidrim	11.00 am	Holy Eucharist (2004 rite)



Notes to the above. Because of the special arrangements in Holy Week the usual pattern of services in respect of time and language is somewhat altered this month eg. please note the services on April 19th.

We would be very grateful if all who can would help with the decorating of the church for the Easter Festival. This will take place on the morning of Holy Saturday, April 11th. Diolch.

The Vicar would be grateful to be informed in good time of any housebound communicants who wish to receive Holy Communion at Easter.

Contributions to the Lenten appeal on behalf of Ty Hafan, the Welsh children's hospice, may be brought to church at any service during Holy Week and will be sent to Ty Hafan after the Annual Vestry for Meidrim on April 29th.

Meidrim news

Sincere congratulations go to Charlie Kind, son of Stephen and Jo Kind, Penbigwrn, who recently finished his medical course and is now qualified to practise as a General Practitioner. We wish him well in his career as a doctor.

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Recently advice was received by the bishops and clergy of the Church in Wales to the effect that in view of the spread of the virus known as Covid19, also called the coronavirus, the Holy Communion should be received under one kind only i.e. from the paten or plate. The Vicar read out a statement to this effect at the services on March 8. From now on only the officiating priest will receive in both kinds and this arrangement will last until further advice is received. Accordingly this is likely to be the situation at Easter when, as is taught clearly in the Prayer Book, all communicants of the Church should receive the Holy Communion.

We are grateful to the treasurer, Mr Dorian Evans, for preparing the accounts and to Mr Locksmith of Ammanford for auditing them. The accounts will be presented at the Annual Vestry Meeting which will be held in the church hall at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 29 April.

Our thanks go to Mrs Lilian Rees and Mrs Ingrid Herbert for arranging a Fashion Show at Bancyfelin hall on May 1st in aid of church funds. Tickets cost £10 (inclusive of a glass of wine). Thanks also go to Pethau Olyf, the clothes shop in St Clears, for supporting this venture. The proprietor concerned attends the parish church at Trelech and we also thank the congregation at St Teilo's, Penybont, for the gift of an organ copy of Emyneu'r Eglwys, the Welsh hymnal which we use here. This hymn book was the result of much effort and research by Canon W.H. Harries, formerly Professor of Welsh at St David's College, Lampeter, an institution which for many decades has trained many of the clergy who have served in this diocese.

Lent is the period characterised by the disciplines of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. This year we shall be supporting the charitable work of Ty Hafan, a hospice in the Vale of Glamorgan which cares for gravely ill children and their families. Also the loose collection at the joint service on March 29 will be given to this worthy cause. Our thanks go to all who will support this effort.

Once again we had flooding in the village during the recent bad weather. It was not on the scale of towns like Pontypridd. Nonetheless it was distressing enough for those affected and we hope that the damage caused may be swiftly rectified.

On Easter Day this year, that is on April 12, Etta Eirwen, the daughter of Hywel and Kirsty James (and great granddaughter of Mr Glyn James) of Godredewi will be baptised in the parish church at Evening Prayer at 3.30pm. Please pray for the parents and godparents of this little candidate that she may indeed be brought up to serve God faithfully. The family home is the right context for learning not only our mother tongue but also the Christian Faith and the truths taught us by our spiritual mother, the Church. What an awesome responsibility therefore falls upon Christian fathers and mothers!

A public meeting was held in the Youth Hall , Meidrim, on Tuesday March10, with members of the local community council present as well as the County Councillor, Mrs Jean Lewis, and interested residents. The scheme suggested would involve the building of some twenty five new homes in the village.

News of the sick. Some reading these notes will doubtless remember the late Mr Lloyd Jones, formerly headmaster of Meidrim school. His widow, Mrs Doris Jones, who lives near Carmarthen, is now seriously unwell in Prince Philip hospital in Llanelli. Mr Ian Jameson has been affected by an infection and we assure him of our thoughts and prayers. We also remember Miss Sophie Jones, Mrs Ann Jones of Newtown, Powys, and Mr Almor Thomas of Pwlltrap.

Merthyr news

Please note that the Annual Vestry Meeting will be held in church after Evening Prayer on Low Sunday, April 19. The service will begin at 2.15pm.

It is interesting to note that in Wales we often refer to the missionary work of the Celtic monks in the Age of the Saints between the fourth and sixth centuries. The most notable example would be our patron saint, David of Wales. However it is also instructive to note how our Saxon neighbours were converted to Christ. As Pope Gregory the Great wrote in connection with the mission of the monks led by St Augustine in 597 to Kent, there was a need to send priests as well as monks. Why? To baptize converts and to preach. Preaching has been a responsibility of priests who feed the faithful with the Word of God by expounding the Scriptures and with the Bread of everlasting life in the eucharist. Moreover to do this effectively they need to know the people to whom they are preaching and can only do so well by exercising pastoral care. Any proposals and plans for evangelism would do well to remember this lesson of history. Yes, much has changed in the course of fourteen centuries but the need for regular worship and pastoral care has not and, whatever its deficiencies,

the parochial system attempted to meet those needs and has shown a remarkable resilience over the centuries. The problems facing the Church in Wales at this time are not primarily financial but spiritual ones.

Professor Norman Doe of Cardiff University is to be congratulated on editing A New History of the Church in Wales, a book which concentrates on the history of the Welsh Church since disestablishment a century ago. Various people have contributed chapters and the range of topics is wide, from overviews of the period before disestablishment to the challenge of diminishing and elderly congregations. This book makes a good complement to the book on the history of the diocese of St Davids edited by William Gibson and John Morgan Guy which was published a few years ago. A New History will be launched at a session in St Davids Cathedral on Thursday April 30. The book itself costs just under £25 and is published by Cambridge University Press. (Many years ago Professor Doe came with his family to a barbecue at Bryndbedw and so has a link, however tenuous, with this parish).

Our thanks go to Mrs Jean Morse, Capel, for donating the altar flowers and for cleaning the church in February.

The Revd Gareth Parry whom some may remember from his placement here back in 1995 has recently published a slim book on the subject of the saints of the Lleyn peninsula. He is well placed to do so as he originates from that area, being a native of Pwllheli.

Good wishes go to the Revd Wyn Maskell of Talog who has been given a pastoral charge in Ceredigion in the area of Felinfach. His family also has connections with Merthyr. Indeed his paternal grandparents were married in St Martin's Church.

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Assistant Priest Dr Canon Jeni Parsons

Lay Worship Leader Mr. Nathan Jenkins

The Vicar and Roger Penn (separately) will be going to St Mary's from time to time just to pray and will ring the bell when there just to let people know the church is still there.

East Landsker Ministry Area

First of all can I thank everyone who attended the Inauguration Service. My special thanks to Brian Nicholas who volunteered to play the organ.

So, here we are, one jolly Ministry Area/Parish/Deanery of Whitland: St Mary, Cyffig; St Tysilio, Llandysilio; St David, Clynderwen; St Brynach, Llanboidy; St Peter, Lampeter Velfrey; St Catherine, Princes Gate; St David, Llanddewi Velfrey; St Margaret, Eglwys Gymyn; St Margaret, Pendine; St Clydai, Clydau; St Cledwyn, Llanglydwen; St Brynach, Llanfyrnach; St Gwynio, Llanwinio; St Dogmael, Mynachlogddu – whether we like it or not. And we know that the Bishop doesn't like it either but it is what it is and we are where we are.

I don't know what this means for the Grapevine! But I am happy to leave it as it is even though as LMA Dean I am technically Incumbent of all 15 churches.

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***Above top:
St David's Day Service at the
Tabernacle, Whitland***

***Above:
St David's Day cawl lunch held
at St Catherine's in
Princes Gate***

***Left:
Walking Well, St Clears,
walking in the rain at Colby
Gardens.***

As for the council, I don't know where we go from here, no one has said.

We have a choice, we can sit back and moan about what we don't like and hanker after the good old days (whatever they were), or we can get on with it and try to find some way of making something positive out of it. Perhaps this Holy Week we can all spend some time in prayer, reflection and listening and perhaps God can speak to us in that still small voice.

Of late I have found it difficult to find peace and I will admit I did wear myself out and became quite ill so my lentern devotion is to find that peace and I am finding it within the Celtic roots of our church which is much more grounded in community and simplicity.

Diary date

Monday 30th March Easter Vestry 10.30 am Llandysilio, 7.30 pm Llanboidy

Other Vestries TBA.

Cyffig Notes for April 2020

April already, how did that happen? I feel as though I'm being swept along on these endless gales!

I hope by now we shall have welcomed our Bishop Joanna to Cyffig for the Confirmation of Mrs. Deb. Bowen-Rees.

We are heading for very uncertain times with Corona Virus popping up in unexpected places.

It is difficult to plan anything in advance with any certainty. So as usual, we'll trust in the Lord and soldier on, hoping for the best!

Keep well everyone.

Church Cleaning and Altar flowers for April: Mrs. Werrett

The Easter Vestry Meeting will be on Sunday April 26th after the 2.30 pm service.

Eglwys Gymyn

It is good to see that our Minister Rev Huw Davies, is not limping as badly as he was in March when he had to cancel two services which fortunately coincided with two ferocious storms, (Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis) which caused terrible flooding in parts of the Welsh valleys and the Wye and Severn areas of Wales and England.

This month we look forward to Easter and the wonderful service linked to our Christian history. Also we are now scheduling the Easter Vestry which is a key event in the church calendar. Unfortunately this year issues around the 'Coronavirus' are having an impact on our ceremonial services with the instruction from St David's

that 'the congregation will receive bread , but the Chalice must continue to be prepared and consecrated in the usual way, but the celebrant alone should receive from the Chalice'. (A bit disappointing but understandable and manageable under the circumstances).

Our service will still be a wonderful communion of all the congregation especially with our organists, Brian Nicholas and Sheila Wilson.

Since the Coronavirus is now affecting countries and travel all over the world it is good to see that our 'happy wanderer' (Mrs Ann Robinson) has returned from a really enjoyable 3 week holiday in New Zealand, with lots of stories to tell. (With the probable likelihood that holidays for most will be on hold or cancelled in 2020.)

One event we were able to attend before worries of 'Coronavirus' took hold was the March 1st St David's Day cawl lunch held by our sister church St Catherine's in Princes Gate. A lovely friendly meeting with a lovely cawl made for a very enjoyable afternoon with friends. (See photograph on page 27)

Sunday Services at Eglwys Gymyn apart from special Easter services will be at the usual 2.00 pm with Rev Huw.

Trinity, Llanboidy, Tabernacle, Whitland and Bethel, Llanddewi Velfrey

Minister Revd. Guto Llywelyn, Tel. 01269 851655

gutollywelyn@hotmail.com

Trinity: Delyth Dent Tel. 01994 448606 delythdent@btinternet.com

Tabernacle: Meryl James Tel. 01994 240350 Meryljames534@btinternet.com

Bethel: Eric Howells Tel. 01994 240205 erichowells@rocketmail.com

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In line with Government instructions we have, regrettably, been forced to cancel all our services for the foreseeable future. Hopefully this will not be for too long. Please contact me, Guto Llywelyn for more information or support at this difficult time.

Tabernacle

Mae wedi bod yn amser prysur yn y Tabernacl, Hendy-gwyn yn y mis diwethaf yma. Ein tro ni oedd cynnal Gŵyl Rhinwedd a Moes eleni a daeth capeli'r ardal i gyda i'r Tabernacl ddiwedd Chwefror gyda phob capel yn cyfannu eitem. Cafwyd bore i gofio gyda Sian Elin Thomas, y wraig wadd, yn rhoi anerchiad arbennig i'r gynulleidfa.

Yr un diwrnod cynhaliwyd oedfa fedydd gyda Claire a Mathew Thorne yn dod nol yr holl ffordd o wlad Belg i fedyddio ei plentyn Harri Wiliam Thorne. Pob dymuniad da i Harri a'r teulu wrth pawb yn y Tabernacl.

Ac eto ar yr un diwrnod cynhaliwyd Cinio Gŵyl Ddewi Cymdeithas y Capel ! Cafwyd gwledd yn Plas Hyfryd, Arberth, cyn i'r gwr gwadd Alun Lenny, rhoi anerchiad diddorol a llawn hiwmor yn seiliedig ar ei hunangofiant sydd newydd ei gyhoeddi. Teitl y llyfr yw "Byw Ffŵl Pelt" ac mae yn hunangofiant gonest iawn ac yn llawn o storïau doniol a dwys.

Un o uchafbwyntiau'r flwyddyn yw y gwasanaeth Gŵyl Ddewi blynyddol ac roedd canmol mawr ar y plant a'r ieuenctid eleni eto am eu cyfraniadau a'u gwisgoedd arbennig.

Mae sawl un o'n haelodau yn, neu wedi bod, yn yr ysbyty ar hyn o bryd ac rydym yn dymuno yn dda iddynt i gyd.

It has been a very busy month for us at the Tabernacle, Whitland. All the chapels in the area joined us for "Gŵyl Rhinwedd a Moes". The same day Claire and Mathew Thorne travelled all the way from Belgium, to baptise their son, Harri Wiliam Thorne, at a special Service at the Tabernacle. And also on the same day we held our St. David's Day lunch!

One of the highlights of the year is the St. David's Day Service with the children and Young people. And so it was this year as everyone enjoyed seeing the children dressed up in their Welsh costumes and taking part in the Service.

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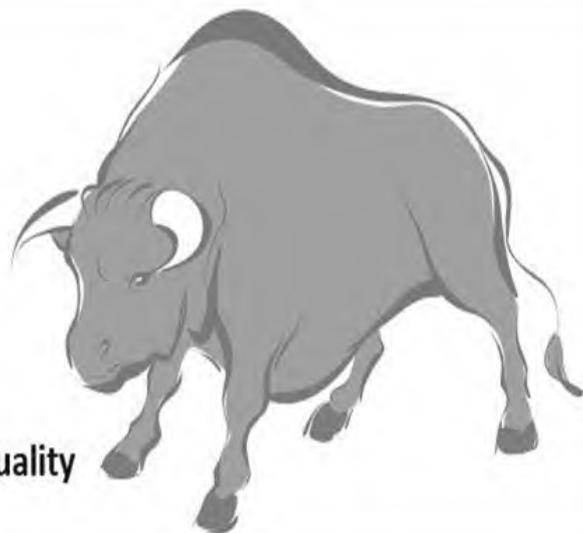
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A few of our members are in hospital, or have been in hospital, and we wish them all a full recovery.

Trinity

Due to the very stormy weather, the Sunday services on the 9th and 16th February were cancelled. The communion service on the first Sunday of the month was a special occasion in that it included the baptism of Elis, the son of Sarah and Noir Jones and grandson of Mrs. Bethan Williams.

On the 23rd of February, members were invited to a special service at Tabernacle Chapel. The guest speaker was Mrs. Sian Elin Thomas who took as her theme 'Helping Others'. Members from different chapels contributed to the service and a collection was made in aid of the Dementia Appeal.

On Wednesday 26th of February, members of Trinity Sisterhood held their monthly meeting in the chapel vestry. The guest speaker was Mrs. Ruth Evans who spoke about the invaluable work of the Carmarthen Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Members learnt a great deal about the selection, training and the work of these special dogs who assist the blind and partially sighted enjoy greater freedom of movement.

Members and friends send their fondest wishes for a speedy recovery to Mrs Doreen Eynon.

Bethel

We celebrated St David's Day with a sermon from our minister based on Jesus' saying that giving even a glass of cold water to someone is a Christian act, and then connecting that to St David's advice to do the little things. The English service on 8th March was also a communion as there will be no service on the last Sunday of March.

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On the 15th we were joined by Tabernacle and Trinity members when the preacher was Mr Hefin Wyn and as always it was an interesting sermon. The following Sunday members and friends were to go to Waungron Residential Home to worship with them, but because of the health scare this was cancelled. There is no service on 29th March as we will be joining Tabernacle for their Annual services, if they go ahead, with the guest preacher being Rev Dewi Myrddyn Hughes of Clydach.

One of our longest serving and most faithful members Sir Eric Howells and Lady Maisie Howells celebrated 60 years of marriage on 27th of February, and we congratulate and send our best wishes to them.

Whitland & District Male Choir News



On Friday 28th February we were invited by Narberth Rugby Club to sing at their Cawl a Chên. It was a great evening and there was an appreciative large audience. Martyn Davies was soloist, and David Thomas our Compère.

On Sunday, March 1st we took part in Cawl a Chên in the St David's Day celebrations at Llanboidy Market Hall. Again, a great afternoon with the hall being full. The soloists were Lotti Makepiece on the Harp, Martyn Davies, and Nigel Phillips. David Thomas was our compère. A great afternoon with the audience participating in a singsong as well. Money raised will go towards Llanboidy Market Hall, and the playing field project.

Please make a note in your diaries of our Patrons' Concert this year at Ysgol Dyffryn Taf on Friday 17th April at 7.30 pm.

We are still looking for new choristers to join our happy and professional choir. You can turn up to any of our main practices on a Thursday evening at 7.30 pm in the Memorial Hall, Whitland. No obligation to come and listen, and see if you would like to be a part of our choir family.

Please contact our Secretary, Hugh Lewis, on 01994 240437 for up to date information during the current Coronavirus crisis.

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Afon Taf Gardening Club Whitland

On the 20th of February Bob Wallis visited Whitland to give a fascinating talk about The Treasures of Tadjikstan and Uzbekistan. It was very strange to see so many well-known flowers and plants growing in such an unfamiliar landscape. Meetings usually take place on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm at Whitland Town Hall, but due the current Coronavirus crisis, and in line with Government instructions, all meetings and trips are hereby cancelled until further notice.

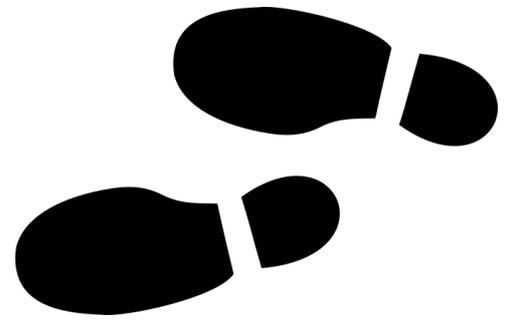
St. Clears Walking Well Group

On the 4th of March walkers braved the very soggy weather for a walk around Colby Gardens starting and ending at Amroth. Despite the weather, it was a very cheerful and pleasant walk. Several beautiful wooden carvings of local animals were on display to welcome the



Spring. It was also time to congratulate Alison Stopp on her special birthday—we are not saying which one!!!

Due the current Coronavirus crisis, and in line with Government instructions, all meetings and trips have been cancelled until further notice.



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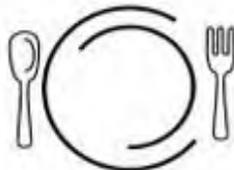
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